

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION: A CASE STUDY

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by

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ABSTRACT

**ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION: A CASE STUDY by MAJ Kayode Abdullahi
Umaru, Nigeria, 71 pages.**

This thesis examines the problems of conflict management and resolution in West Africa. The prevalence of conflicts has risen since the last decade and though the Economic Community of West African States has been involved in the management of these conflicts, the efforts were marred by a number of problems.

These problems were examined by looking into the effects of the causes of conflicts and the historical background of West African nations. The economy and political culture, organizational structure for security mechanism and mandate for intervention were appraised as methodology parameters in the ECOWAS management of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflict case studies.

Bad economic and political management, the Anglo-francophone dichotomy and absence of an institutional conflict management mechanism were identified as the problems of conflict management and resolution in West Africa. Bad economic and political management were judged to be the most critical of the problems. This thesis concluded that there is no level of efficiency in the management of conflicts that would eliminate the causes of conflicts and therefore recommended that more ECOWAS efforts should be directed at enhancing economic development of its members and the economic integration of the subregion. The thesis further recommended future studies in area of the economic development and integration, devoid of Anglo-francophone dichotomy for the West African subregion.

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Consequently, the authors whose works were cited in the thesis are hereby acknowledged for their pioneer efforts on the subject of conflict management and resolution. It is my hope that my thesis would excite these authors' line of thought in the areas suggested for further studies.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE.....	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ACRONYMS	viii
ILLUSTRATIONS.....	xi
TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Nature and Goals of Conflicts.....	2
Thesis Questions	4
Definition of Terms.....	4
Significance.....	5
Limitation and Delimitation.....	6
2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY.....	8
Research Methodology.....	15
3. THE LIBERIAN CONFLICT	19
Background.....	19
The Liberian Civil War	21
ECOWAS Intervention.....	22
UN Intervention.....	29
The Abuja Peace Process	30
The Electoral Process	31
Case Study Analysis	32
4. THE SIERRA LEONEAN CONFLICT	39
Background.....	39

The Revolutionary United Front.....	41
Kabbah-RUF negotiations	44
The Military Coup of May 25, 1997	45
Reinstatement of President Tejan Kabbah	46
The January 1999 Rebel offensive.....	47
The Diplomatic Approach.....	48
The Peace Process.....	49
Case Study Analysis	51
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	56
Conclusion.....	60
Recommendations for Future Studies.....	61
FIGURE	
1. GNP per Capita, constant 1995	33
APPENDIX	
A. Colonial/Language Distribution of ECOWAS Member States.....	62
B. Map of Liberia	63
C. GDPs of ECOWAS Member States (1991-2).....	64
D. Map of Sierra Leone.....	65
BIBLIOGRAPHY	66
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	69
CERTIFICATION FOR MMAS DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT.....	70

ACRONYMS

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AAFC	Allied Armed Forces of the Community
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AU	African Union
APC	All People's Congress
ANAD	Accord on Non-Aggression and Defense
CDF	Civil defense Force
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcome
FC	Force commander
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IECOM	Independent Elections Commission
IFMC	Inter-Faith Mediation Committee
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority for Development
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity
ILA	Inter Legislative Assembly
INEC	Independent National Elections Commission

IFES	International Foundation of Election systems
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
LEON	Liberia Electoral Observer Network
LNTG	Liberia National Transitional Government
LPP	Liberia People's Party
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NCCP	National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
NDPL	National Democratic Party of Liberia
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPP	National Patriotic Party
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PMAD	Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SADC	South African Development Community
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SMC	Standing Mediation Committee
SBU	Small Boy Unit
SIEROMOCO	Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Company
SLA	Sierra Leone Liberation army
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
TPS	Temporary Protected status
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia
UN	United Nations
UNMO	United Nations Military Observer

UNOMIL	United Nation Observer Mission in Liberia
UNOMSIL	United Nation Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Map of Liberia.....	63
2. GNP per Capita, Constant 1995.....	33
3. Map of Sierra Leone.....	65

TABLES

Table	Page
1. Colonial/Language Distribution of ECOWAS states	62
2. GDPs of ECOWAS Member States (1991-92).....	64

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts are derivable from possession of, and pursuit of divergent ideas, goals, claims, interests and aspirations by people in their relations. Conflicts occur between individuals, within states (civil wars), and between states. According to Ross Stagner (1967) conflict is a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other, but not both.¹

This means that conflicts have been part of mankind since creation, and that it will continue to be so. If this is the case, the extent to which conflict affects human existence is determined by human capacity to reduce, manage or resolve it. This thesis appraises the problems of conflict management and resolution in the West African subregion with a view to making recommendations.

Resolution and management have been variously defined in conflict situations, it is therefore necessary to define the words in the context of this thesis. Management is considered to be all actions taken to bring about peace between belligerent parties. This includes mediation, peace making, peace enforcement, and peacekeeping. While resolution, consists of all actions taken to sustain, the resultant peace from the management of the conflict, and the prevention of a reoccurrence of the conflict. This includes post conflict activities (peace building) such as elections, rebuilding of government and infrastructure, rehabilitation of displaced persons and the establishment of mechanism for conflict prevention. In 1999, Otite asserted that because there is hardly any permanent peace or permanent resolution or transformation of conflicts, it might be

more appropriate to speak of conflict management as a means of coping with the process of resolving or transforming conflicts.²

It follows therefore, that proper understanding of the nature of conflict is a fundamental requirement for developing greater ability and the appropriate strategy of managing conflict.

Nature and Goals of Conflicts

Many conflict situations involve conditions of values or ideology that place premium on possessing the same resources or positions. It is characterized by disagreement about the distribution of some scarce resources, which the parties all value highly (e.g. solid minerals or political power). Other sources of incompatibility, which are more fundamental, may arise from parties possessing completely different sets of cultural beliefs and values about desirable future, social structures, ways to achieve this, and the basic nature of circumstances within which relationships exist (e.g. agitation for a representative national government). In the case of ideological incompatibilities, the parties may fail to share the same perspectives of the situation and work in other ways that have no shared values.

Goals are indicative of the underlying sources of particular types of conflicts. The issues refer to interrelated goal incompatibilities of opponents. These thus become the subject dimensions upon which parties take up opposed positions because of their conscious goals.

Goals in a conflict may range from self-determination, religious control, cultural domination, to resource control. Here one party wins and the other loses, but both

parties exist at the end of the dispute. A conflict where the goal is the control of resources such as oil, gas, and solid minerals is resource conflict. There is also the conflict over who controls the political system in a nation state (via an election or a revolutionary war), this was case in the Chadian, Liberian, and the Sierra Leonean wars and in the ongoing war in Ivory Coast. A conflict over the continued coexistence (as a corporate entity) in a nation state, is a secessionist or separatist war, this was the case of the Biafran war in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970 and the ongoing war in Cameroon. Survival and resource conflicts are usually more intractable.

Since conflict situations are part of the exigencies of human existence, nature of conflicts is dynamic to the effect that attitude, value and behavior change over time. As a result, social, political, and economic factors become critical causes of conflicts. According to Osita Eze (1984) socioeconomic rights provide the material basis for the enjoyment of political and civil rights. What can equally be maintained is that civil and political rights can, to the extent that they are not too removed from the socioeconomic base, influence its direction of change.³

Therefore, where there is deprivation to these basic rights, either through some form of injustice or uneven distribution of accessible resources, by government or the leadership, resistance or force can be the ultimate outcome. This deprivation of basic rights is manifested in the form of lack of education, social security, lack of basic societal amenities and unemployment. In such situation, the most hit, are the able bodied youths. They therefore form the disgruntled steady source of recruitment for the ultimate forceful revolt against the state, the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean wars, for example, were fought predominantly by militia youths.⁴

Consequently, these multifaceted goals and causes pose great challenges to resolution and managements of conflicts. The diverse perspectives of member nations of multilateral organizations that seek to resolve and manage conflicts further compound these challenges. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for example, is composed of member nations that have great differences in cultural, ethnic and colonial backgrounds. Other differences are political structures, cultural and religious beliefs, and economic developments. Anglo-Francophone dichotomy, extra regional influences, fear of hegemonies, and standard of training of militaries are other factors of divergence in the subregional body. Evidently, the plurality in the nature of these ECOWAS nations poses great challenges to collective resolution and management of conflicts in the subregion. Consequently, this thesis appraised these challenges by seeking answers to the following questions:

1. Primary question. What are the problems of conflict management and resolution in the West African subregion?
2. Secondary questions.
 - a. What are the effects of the root causes of conflicts in member nations on ECOWAS capacity for conflict management and resolution?
 - b. What are the effects of the history of ECOWAS on its capacity for conflict management and resolution?

Definition of Terms

Collective Defense Agreement. Collective defense agreement involves an alliance between two or more states whereby they undertake to come to the assistance of whichever party suffers an attack.⁵

Collective Security. Collective security is an agreement among states to renounce the use of force in settling their disputes, while at the same time agreeing to use force against one of their number who breaks this rule. Under a collective security arrangement, such as the UN Charter, individual member states lose certain sovereign rights, the most important being the right to resort to force in self-defense. A member state that is subject to attack may use direct force in self-defense only as an interim measure. If and when the collectivity takes action, the state's right falls away.⁶

Peacemaking. Peacemaking refers to the use diplomatic means to persuade parties in conflict to cease hostilities and to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their dispute; this requires the consent of the parties to the dispute.⁷

Peacebuilding. Peacebuilding includes the identification and support of measures and structures, which will promote peace and build trust and interaction among former enemies, in order to avoid a relapse of into conflict.⁸

Preventive Diplomacy. Preventive diplomacy is action to prevent disputes from developing between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflict and to limit the expansion of conflicts when they occur.⁹

Significance

The significance of this thesis lies in the fact that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) needs to develop strong capacity for conflict resolution and management in the face increasing incidences of conflicts within the subregion. Additional research into conflict management efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone would therefore be significant in improving ECOWAS capacity for management and resolution of conflicts and stability of the subregion.

Limitations

Classified information was unavailable for this thesis.

Delimitation

Though ECOWAS was involved in the resolution of a number of conflicts in the West African subregion, this thesis researched only into the resolution efforts of the Liberian, and Sierra Leonean conflicts. This is because the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts were the first to be managed under ECOWAS initiative. They also have more literature available on them than the Guinean crisis in which the government was assisted to suppress an uprising and the ongoing Ivory Coast crisis in which France is spearheading the peace process.

The prevalence of regional and subregional conflicts in the world, especially in developing countries of Africa, has shifted world attention to prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts. Researchers have, accordingly shifted their efforts towards enhancing capacity building for conflict prevention, resolution, and management; works on conflict management and resolution in Africa abound, but relatively few exist on ECOWAS efforts. This is because ECOWAS led conflict management and resolution processes started only last decade. Consequently, review of literature will be limited to some of the few available books, reports, magazines, journals, and Internet articles.

¹Ross Stagner, quoted in Mitchel C. R., “*The Structure of International Conflict.*” (London: Macmillan Press Limited, 1981), 15.

²Otite Onigu, “On Conflicts, their Resolution, Transformation, and Management.” In Otite Onigu and Isaac O. Albert, eds. *Community Conflicts in Nigeria: Management, Resolution, and Transformation,* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Spectrum Books, Limited, 1999), 1-33.

³Eze Osita, “Human Rights in Africa.” (Some selected problems), NIIA/Macmillan Nigeria Limited. 1984.

⁴Richards Paul, “Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Crisis of Youths?” *Conflict in Africa*, (London and New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers), 134-170.

⁵Mark Malan, “The OAU and African sub-regional organizations: A Closer Look at the “peace pyramid,”(Institute for Security Studies Occasional Paper no. 36, January, 1999), 1-9.

⁶Ibid., 1-2 of 9.

⁷The “General Guidelines for Peace-keeping Operations,”(Department of Peacekeeping Operations, N.Y.: The United Nations, October 1995.)

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter set out to identify, from existing literature on ECOWAS conflict management, potential answers to the thesis questions; that is what are the effects of causal factors of conflicts, the colonial history of member nations and the organizational structure of security mechanism on ECOWAS capacity for conflict management in the West African sub region? The potential answers identified in the literature review were used to determine methodology parameters for the Liberian and Sierra Leonean case studies. In view of this objective, ten works were reviewed below.

In 1999 Walraven analyzed the intervention of ECOWAS as a multilateral, third party actor in the Liberian civil war. He asserted that the mandate for the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) intervention was suspect because it was not borne out of consensus of member nations or that of the parties to the conflict. Walraven also observed that the partisanship of ECOMOG of operations, late and incomplete imposition of ECOWAS embargo, and incomplete funding hindered ECOMOG operations during the process. He concluded that, many Monrovians were grateful to ECOMOG for their salvation from the murderous militias, in spite of the intervention force's many failings.

In 1998, Vib-Sanziri, an officer of the Ghanaian Army analyzed what processes and approaches Africa (For this thesis Africa represented the regional and sub-regional bodies, such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the South African Development Community (SADC)) should

adopt for a more responsive and effective management and resolution of conflicts on the continent. The study examined the Chad and Liberian conflicts and assessed the peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts of OAU and ECOWAS in line with the basic tenets of mediation, negotiation, and peace support operations. He asserted that the absence of institutional organs and procedures for conflict management, led to the use of ad hoc bodies that were considered partial by some of the factions. He concluded by suggesting that greater emphasis be placed on early warning systems that would enhance the efficacy of preventive diplomacy in conflict management.

In 1999 Yoroms discussed the structures of security cooperation in West Africa. He reviewed the Accord on Non-Aggression and Defense (ANAD), the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense (PMAD), the Francophone and Anglophone rivalry in ECOWAS, and the effects of these on the resolution of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts. He viewed West Africa as a complex subregion interwoven with colonial legacies deepened by linguistic differences, and contended that the fear of Nigeria's hegemony and the influence of France on its former colonies affected the resolution of both conflicts. Yoroms asserted that, although ECOWAS has a new mechanism for conflict prevention and resolution, its inability to merge PMAD and the new mechanism together with ANAD is likely to reawaken the "cold war" between the Francophone and Anglophone countries. He viewed this to be detrimental to future efforts on conflict resolution in the subregion. He recommended the following three ways ECOWAS could effectively and efficiently resolve conflicts within its subregion: (1) the establishment of rule-enforcing mechanisms to discipline erring individuals and even states that encourage

and sponsor belligerents in their subregions; (2) the demonstration by member states of sustainable credibility and avoidance of being partisan when finding solutions to regional conflicts and lastly; and (3) to create “the presence of accountable democratic governance.”¹

In 1995 Richards identified the weakness of the state and traditional sources of authority within civil society, the emergence of warlords as key political actors, and the deployment of large numbers of juvenile conscripts in conflicts as the similarities between the civil war in Liberia and the insurgency in Sierra Leone. He believed that the link between the two rebel groups was due to competition for mineral and forest resource rich interior economies of ‘Greater Liberia’ and eastern Sierra Leone, which sought to mould two sets of local social circumstances to their own ends. Richard also observed that the rebel movements exploited the potentially dissident, partly educated, and rural youths who saw economic and employment opportunities in a recessionary landscape, the wilderness economies of interior Liberia and eastern Sierra Leone, dominated by tropical timber and diamonds. He concluded that the antidote to further spread in Africa of violence based on enrolment of disaffected youth will require particular attention to be given to those factors likely to engender the confidence of the younger generation in the structure of state and civil society.

In 2000 Khobe, Brigadier General, Nigerian Army (late), former Force Commander of ECOMOG and former Chief of Defense Staff, Republic of Sierra Leone reviewed the evolution and conduct of ECOMOG operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone through the analysis of the background of ECOWAS conflict resolution mechanism, the deployment of the force and the concept and conduct of operations. He identified the

following factors: (1) lack of economic resources by member states to sustain large-scale military operations; (2) absence of political will of western powers to assist ECOWAS peace process; (3) rivalry and deep suspicion between the ruling classes; and (4) the different colonial experiences of the member states, as factors which affected ECOMOG operations. He asserted that the elimination these problems will enhance the effectiveness of ECOMOG operations in future.

In 1997 Adedeji examined the pattern of cooperation, which he asserted, has been marked in a most remarkable manner by the mixture of colonial experiences among West African countries (see Appendix A). He observed that the language barrier created by the pattern of colonialism and the perpetuation of the strong vertical link between former French colonies and France as opposed to the weak horizontal link between them and their British counterparts, discouraged meaningful relations across the Anglophone/Francophone divide. This situation, he said, is complicated by an ideological divide in which, Ghana, an Anglophone is on the radical left and Ivory Coast, a Francophone on the conservative right. He opined that, though ECOWAS objectives were to provide a pan West African economic organization to replace similar bodies of limited membership and to eliminate the distrust among the Anglophone and francophone states, ECOWAS still has a long way to go. He emphasized that the existence, side by side, of two security bodies, PMAD and ANAD not only dissipates energy and resources, which ought to have been concentrated into one body, but also accentuates the weaknesses of each of them. He therefore concluded that, for West Africa, the problem is not lack of mechanism but that of creating an effective body out of a multiplicity and

that, the important issue of a focal point for conflict resolution and political co-operation may require a new approach.

In 1999 Malan assessed African sub-regional organizations (and their member states) in a security context and identified their perceived place in conflict management endeavors. He observed that, despite their diversity, all sub-regional organizations in Africa (even the larger ones such as ECOWAS and SADC) lack institutionalized crisis prevention and management mechanism. Malan believed that, as a result, regional military involvement in conflict resolution has been ad hoc and not in accordance with a specific operating procedure. He asserted that, despite the obvious shortcomings, these diverse ‘subregional organizations’ are regarded by many as primary units of security and conflict management for the African continent. Whereas, conflicts caused by political breakdown in African countries can rarely be remedied by short-term military interventions (peacekeeping or peace enforcement). Malan believes rather, that a system of phased and prioritized facilitating processes is needed for their management. He concluded by stressing the need to institutionalize African mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. This he asserted would be facilitated by the subregions themselves reaching consensus on ‘political’ principles, standards, and organizational characteristics that would typify a functional and effective subregional mechanism for conflict management.

In July 2001 Golwa, compared the dimension of social, economic and political factors that have been responsible for conflicts in West Africa. He asserted that social, economic and political causes of conflicts are largely internally generated. Golwa

believed that these conflicts have the tendency to snowball to the neighboring states to become subregional conflict in a highly militarized West African society. He stressed, however, that apart from the internally generated factors, situations of tension have been caused externally by globalization which brutally exposed the hitherto dependency economies of the subregion to the world markets forces. He concluded that since resource based conflicts are usually more intractable to resolve, they should be treated internationally and with Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in development programs, that preventive potential conflicts.

In June 1999 Lord-Attivor assessed the AU² conflict management mechanism through the study of the Chadian and Liberian crises. He observed that in both countries and indeed most of African countries, the main sources of conflicts have been economic vulnerability and political instability, while AU organs for conflict management have been ad hoc in nature until the establishment, in 1993 of the mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution. He concluded that the establishment of the mechanism is an indication that the AU realized the importance of preventive diplomacy and early warning concept as tools for conflict prevention and management.

In 2000, Vogt and Muyangwa assessed the role and performance of the Organization of African Unity's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution since its establishment in 1993. They asserted that the mechanism has been largely ineffective in managing African conflicts such as Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Comoros and thus has remained a peripheral actor in most cases. This, according to them, is due to the following: the AU is relatively new to the

field of conflict management and is still acquiring the necessary experience; the number, intensity, scope, and range of conflicts in Africa have often been overwhelming for the AU mechanism; and the AU has still not been able to overcome several of the financial, organizational, and mandate-related limitations that proscribed its conflict management role in the pre-1993 era. They concluded that the future success of the AU mechanism depends on how well it is able to develop relationships with African subregional organizations like ECOWAS, SADC, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Inter Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD).

The foregoing review of literature revealed that the weak socio-economic and political nature of most member nations have been responsible for the high instability in the sub-region. For example, Golwa (2001),³ observed that leadership issues, ethnic or character conflicts, economic dependency coupled with lack of economic growth, bad governance and collapsed structures are factors which lead to conflicts and strained relations. Similarly Lord-Attivor (1999),⁴ noted that mismanagement of the economy and polity fuels conflicts along ethnic lines, this is more so since ethnic lines are the most fragile compartments in which nations could crack, the temptation to use ethnic rivalry for political gains is equally powerful and is usually exploited.⁵ The effect of the situation is most often greater on one section or ethnic group than the others, the result is progressive revolts that, lead to insurgency. Nations in perpetual state of instability therefore have less desire to participate in resolving other nations' crises.

Another revelation of the review is the diverse colonial experience of the member nations of ECOWAS, this apart from resulting in cooperation along colonial lines, such

as the formation of Francophone ANAD and predominantly Anglophone PMAD, makes common agreement difficult among the member nations. As Adeniji, (1997) puts it, the language barrier created by the pattern of colonialism and the perpetuation of the vertical link with the former imperial power at the expense of the horizontal link with neighboring states, discouraged much meaningful relations across the Anglophone/Francophone divide.⁶ Joses, (1999) reinforced this position by asserted that the inability of ECOWAS to take bold steps to work out a merger of PMAD and the new ECOWAS mechanism together with ANAD is likely to reawaken the ‘cold war’ between the Francophone and Anglophone countries to the detriment of future efforts towards conflict resolution in the sub-region.⁷

Consequently, the identified potential answers from the literature review were: weak economies, compartmental sociopolitical identities and government inability to improve the situations are causal factors for intractable conflicts in West Africa (answers the first secondary question) while, the plurality of ethnic groups coupled with the Franco-Anglophone dichotomy in the sub-region makes collective resolution of conflicts a matter of French or English lineage (answers the second secondary question). A combination of the effects of the causes of intractable conflicts and the plurality of ethnic groups and the colonial history of member states of ECOWAS is therefore a potential answer to the primary answer.

Research Methodology

The works reviewed above were primarily from secondary sources obtained from books, occasional papers, journals and articles from the Internet. The review identified

poor economy and political instability of most member nations, in addition to the Anglo-francophone dichotomy as major factors militating against effective conflict management and resolution in the West African sub-region. Subsequently, chronological accounts of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts and ECOWAS management and resolution of the conflicts were analyzed in order to reaffirm or disagree with the assertions of the literature review. The case studies were analyzed with respect to the following parameters:

The GDP per capita. The GDP per capita was considered in two parts:

- a. GDP per capita of the case study country.
- b. GDP per capita of each other member nation as a reflection of their economies and their contributions to ECOWAS budget.

The GDP per capita of individual nations was assessed in order to establish a relationship between the state of national economy and stability of the country as well as the economic capacity of ECOWAS.

Polity. The polity of both countries was analyzed with a view to establishing a link between their political culture and stability, thereby identifying a link between national polity and conflicts.

Organizational structure. The organizational structure was considered in two parts:

- a. ECOWAS political organizational structure for conflict management and resolution.
- b. ECOMOG force organizational structure.

Political and force organizational structures were analyzed in order to establish a link between organizational structure and effectiveness of ECOWAS conflict management and resolution mechanism.

The Mandate. The mandate for ECOWAS intervention in the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean conflicts were appraised with a view to establishing the effects of mandate on the effectiveness of ECOWAS management and resolution process.

The GDP per Capita and polity were chosen because they are good indicators for conflicts while organizational structure and mandate were chosen because they are important requirements for efficient management and resolution of conflicts. The Liberian conflict was the first to be appraised with respect to these parameters.

¹Joses Gani Yoroms, “Mechanisms for Conflict Management in ECOWAS,” Occasional Paper- No. 8/1999 of the African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes,7 of 9.

²Organization of African Unity is now known as African Union (AU).

³‘Peace pyramid’ describes pyramidal conflict management structure whereby the initial response to African conflicts would come from local and national organizations, followed by responses at the sub-regional and regional (AU) levels, and finally by those of the UN and the broader international community.

⁴Joseph Golwa, “Social, Political, and Economic Factors in Conflict Situations: A Study of the West African Sub-Region.”. Paper presented at a Seminar on Conflict indicators and early Warning Mechanisms in Africa organized by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja, 22 July 2001.

⁵Edward Lord-Attivor, “Conflicts in Africa: Problems in Management and Resolution.” Paper submitted for the award of the Fellowship of the Nigerian National War College, Abuja, Nigeria, June 1998, 45.

⁶L. S. Aminu, “Peace Keeping and Humanitarian Relief Operations.” eds. M. Vogt and Aminu L. S. (Fourth Dimension Publishers Co. Ltd, Enugu, 1996.) 101.

⁷Olu Adedeji, “Mechanisms for conflict prevention in West Africa: Politics of harmonization.” Occasional paper No. 2/1997 of the African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 2 of 8.

CHAPTER 3

THE LIBERIAN CONFLICT

The Liberian conflict is the first of the two case study conflicts analyzed in this thesis, with a view to examining the effects of causes of conflicts, the historical background of member states and the organizational structure on ECOWAS capacity for conflict management and resolution in the West African sub-region. In doing this, the GDP per capita of Liberia and other member states in the decade before the conflict, the political culture and stability of Liberia prior to the conflict, and the ECOWAS organizational structure and mandate for managing the conflict were appraised. The appraisal was however preceded by a chronological account of the conflict and its management by ECOWAS and other multilateral third parties.

Background

The Republic of Liberia is situated at the southwestern corner of the great western bulge of West Africa, bordered on the northwest by Sierra Leone and the southeast by Ivory Coast; the Republic of Guinea lies to its north (see Appendix B). Six of the major indigenous tribes in Liberia are the Gola, Mandingo, Gio (Dan), Krahn, Mano (Mah), and Mende. The country has more than 20 local languages and dialects of the Niger-Congo group, including the Kwa, Mande and West Atlantic sub-groups.

Half the adult population are adherents to indigenous religions, with the rest about equally split between Christian, mostly Protestants, and Muslim faiths; Roman Catholicism is more widespread among the Kru people, while “Pentecostal” and “spiritual” church worship is increasing in Liberia.

The most dominant mining industry was in iron ore whose production was controlled by foreign concerns and was the single largest source of revenue. Diamonds and gold were the only other economically significant minerals, and were mined by small-scale Liberian prospectors and miners, with lots of Asians and West African nationals. Iron ore and diamond are exported mostly to United States and European Economic Community.

Politically, Liberia's leadership has long subscribed to the Republican form of government, which is supposedly democratic. The electoral process has often been manipulated to the extent that only a particular group of people, the Americo-Liberian elites, has been within the corridors of power.

The American-Liberian elites, who constitute 5 per cent of total population, misruled and emasculated popular Afro-Liberian political sentiments in Liberia for 133 years, this created conditions for extra-constitutional military intervention by soldiers. Thus in 1980, Master Sergeant Samuel Doe led a group of tribal Afro-Liberian non commissioned officers (NCOs) in a military coup d'etat, which overthrew the government of William R. Tolbert, and dismantled the Americo-Liberian oligarchy. The oligarchy had ruled from small enclaves called settlements along the coastal region where they settled on arrival from the United States.

The first indigenous government of President Samuel Doe did not make the difference the Liberian society sought following the 'dismantling' of the Americo-Liberian oligarchy. Foreigners dominated and controlled the Liberian economy while Liberians did the menial jobs. The lack of integrity of the Interim National Assembly

after the 1984 elections which was rejected by other parties, and the continued repression of the society by the Doe NDPL government, firmly established conditions for national instability that was evident in the 1985 abortive Gio coup. Unemployment was high and several other failed attempts by the military to overthrow Doe's government led to instability, which resulted in the civil war.

The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) under Charles Taylor¹ launched a rebellion from the small town of Butuo in Nimba County on 24 December 1989 to overthrow the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) Government. Capitalizing on popular discontent against the Doe government, Charles Taylor² mobilized mostly Gio and Mano ethnic elements into the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).

In May 1990, Charles Taylor rejected the holding of free and fair elections offered by the NDPL Government and that was to be devoid of President Doe's participation. Similarly, the Liberian Inter-Faith Mediation Committee (IFMC)³ proposed the first real public and neutral attempt at mediation between Doe, Taylor and Prince Johnson in June. Taylor who categorically demanded for the resignation of President Doe spurned this effort.

The Liberian Civil War

The NPLF invasion of Liberia in July 1990 and subsequent clashes with the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), created unfortunate developments of wanton killings and carnage against Liberians (especially the Kran and Mandigo) and foreigners alike. It was under these conditions that President Doe requested the assistance of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the restoration of normalcy to country. It should be noted that Liberia was not in good terms with its neighbors at this time.

Subsequently, the request for assistance would split the Community, for the Anglophone countries led by Nigeria, were prepared to assist, while the Francophone countries led by Ivory Coast, were opposed to military intervention. They preferred dialogue and negotiations, which suited Ivory Coast, because Charles Taylor was on the verge of a military victory.⁴

ECOWAS Intervention

Consequently, ECOWAS stepped into the fray through an initiative, which involved the mobilization of the necessary political, diplomatic, economic and military resources within and without the region to ameliorate a regional problem that potentially threatened widespread destabilization.

In execution, ECOWAS sought to improve on the proposals of the IFMC by adding three more basic provisions.⁵ the first was military; it involved the implementation of the ceasefire, encampment and disarmament, and reorganization of the national security forces; second, social provisions were added to cover repatriation and resettlement of refugees; third, political provisions were included for convening a national conference to agree on the modalities for the formation of a broad-based government. Leaders of the warring factions were to be excluded from heading the government.

A five-member Consultative Group on Liberia, designated the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) was setup on 30 May 1990 to kick-start the ECOWAS mechanism for the resolution and management of the conflict. The predominantly Anglophone committee was composed of The Gambia, the chairperson, Ghana, Guinea (the only Francophone member), Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

The SMC immediately scheduled peace talks between the government of President Doe and the NPFL, for Freetown in July 1990, the NPFL, declared that it would not accept a ceasefire or the projected ECOWAS peacekeeping force, which it labeled an “invasion force.” Notwithstanding the NPFL position on the Freetown talks, the summit of Heads of State of the SMC convened in Banjul, The Gambia, on 6 and 7 August 1990 to discuss arrangements for resolving the conflict. The SMC proposed an ECOWAS peace plan that was duly approved by the Authority⁶ of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government on 25 August 1990, and conveyed to the UN Security Council. Highlights of Decision A/DEC.1/8/90 on the ceasefire and establishment of ECOMOG and all other related decisions are as follows:

- a. There was to be an immediate ceasefire.
- b. Under the authority of the Chairman of ECOWAS, a ceasefire monitoring force, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), was to be set up, comprising of military contingents from the member states of the SMC, including Guinea and Sierra Leone.
- c. A broad-based Interim Government was to be set up in the Republic of Liberia to administer the country and the SMC was to facilitate the convening of a conference of all political parties and other interest groups who would then determine the composition and establishment of the Interim government. None of the leaders of the warring factions was to lead the Interim government.
- d. Free and fair elections leading to a democratically elected government were to be organized and observed by ECOWAS.
- e. A Special Emergency Fund with a projected budget of about \$50 million was

to be established for the purpose of the peace process and humanitarian needs.

f. A Special Representative was to be appointed by the Executive Secretary to administer ECOWAS peace operations in Liberia and was to work in collaboration with the ECOMOG Force Commander.

In accordance with the ECOWAS peace plan, and following the deployment of ECOMOG, the first National Conference was convened in Banjul during 27-31 August 1990. At the conference, Dr Amos Sawyer, a former Professor of the University of Liberia, the Chairman of the Constitutional Drafting Commission in 1984, and lately the Leader of the Liberia People's Party (LPP), was elected the Interim President. Bishop Ronald Diggs, a representative of the Liberian Council of Churches, was elected Vice-President while members of the Interim Legislative Assembly (ILA) were elected from among those present. Although the NPFL was not represented, six seats, including that of Speaker were allotted to it. The Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) was inaugurated on 22 November 1990.

The Bamako Accord of November 1990

Three months after ECOMOG fought its way into Liberia, an extraordinary summit of the Authority of ECOWAS was held in Bamako, Mali on 28 November 1990. The summit had all the parties to the conflict, and the Chairman of the African Union (AU) President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda in attendance. The ECOWAS peace plan was negotiated and an accord reached with the following decisions and agreements:

a. Approval of all the decisions of the SMC during its first session in Banjul, on 6-7 August 1990.

b. Further to the approval above, the adoption of an ECOWAS peace plan for Liberia and the entire West African sub-region.

c. The conclusion of an agreement on the status of ECOMOG between the Community and the IGNU.

d. The joint declaration on ceasefire of hostilities and peaceful settlement of conflict by the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), the NPFL, and the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL).

The Bamako Accord also provided for the holding of ECOWAS supervised general elections to be monitored by ECOMOG within 12 months. In pursuance of this Accord, a meeting of the SMC was scheduled for Banjul on 20 December 1990, to map out modalities for the implementation of the Accord by all parties.

The SMC December 1990 Banjul Meeting

The Banjul session of the SMC failed because the NPFL reneged on its commitment to the Bamako Accord, instead it argued that the Conference engendered an “imported government” since it was not held on Liberian soil and that the “Conference was not representative of all the full spectrum of tendencies and interests in Liberia.”⁷ In addition, the NPFL maintained that Banjul was not neutral since The Gambian troops were a part of ECOMOG operations against it.

Consequent upon the absence of NPFL, a major party to the conflict, the remaining parties present, decided to convene another All-Liberian Conference within sixty days, to settle the issue of Interim Government

The February 1991 Lome Accord

Ivory Coast, a major francophone country, called for a Security Council debate on 22 January 1991 and continued respect of the 28 November 1991 Bamako Ceasefire Agreement, by all parties to the conflict. Subsequently, the fifth session of the SMC sponsored by Nigeria, Senegal and host Togo, took place in Lome from 12 to 15 February 1991, at this session, all three factions signed another Accord (The Lome Plan.) The Lome plan provided for the disbanding of the factions and the establishment of a number of assembly and disarmament sites to be co-located with ECOMOG reception centers. The disarmed combatants were to be rehabilitated.

The continued NPFL opposition to ECOMOG deployment inland after the Lome Accord led to the breakdown of the Bamako ceasefire proposals. Similarly, the March 1991 All-Liberia Conference that was aimed at adopting the ECOWAS Peace Plan, and the formation of a broad-based Interim Government failed after a five-week session on 20 April 1991. Despite this, the inauguration of the Interim Legislative Assembly (ILA) took place in May 1991 with an offer by the Interim government, of power sharing to the factions.

The Yamoussoukro Accords I-IV, June-October 1991

The Ivorian call on the UN for intervention in January 1991 was followed with a series of meetings that took place in Yamoussoukro between June and October 1991. The meetings were engineered by US Congressman Mervyn Dymally, Chairman House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Africa and co-sponsored by Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Nigeria and Togo, the IGNU, and all the factions were in attendance.

The first accord of 30 June agreed that the Interim President remains in office to facilitate preparations for the elections and that the factions continue to maintain the security status quo until after the elections. The second accord of 30 July rescheduled the elections for January 1992 and acknowledged former President Carter's acceptance to help organize the elections. The third accord of 17 September approved the establishment of the Elections Commission and a Supreme Court by the Interim Government and the NPFL. The fourth accord of 30 October provided for disarmament and encampment of combatants under ECOMOG supervision within a 60-day time frame before repatriation, rehabilitation and nation-wide elections. In addition, ECOMOG was to establish a buffer zone on the border with Sierra Leone and control all air and seaports as well as border crossings.

The Elections Commission and the Supreme Court were sworn in January and March 1992 respectively in accordance with the Yamoussoukro Accords. Meanwhile, ECOMOG, augmented by Senegal to over 10,000 began countrywide deployment for disarmament and encampment of the combatants. But ECOMOG troops were attacked as they deployed leading to the loss of six Senegalese soldiers in a 10-hour fight against NPFL. The Nigerian contingent also had two dead and some others held hostage in a series of attacks by NPFL. It took the intervention of President Carter to secure the release of the hostages as well as the safe withdrawal of ECOMOG troops from NPFL controlled areas.

The peace process suffered another setback when the NPFL launched Operation Octopus against Monrovia on 15 October 1992. This was after it received large shipment

of weapons and equipment including four tanks, 20 armored personnel carriers, tones of artillery pieces, anti-tank missiles, and small arms in September 1992.

Rebel infiltrations and atrocities continued, as the NPFL killed five American Nuns⁸ and four local assistants, this led to the UN Security Council Resolution 788 of 1992 which imposed a total embargo on the shipment of weapons and military equipment to Liberia. The UN Resolution reaffirmed its faith in the Yamousoukro Accord and approved the appointment of Trevor Gordon-Somers as the Special Representative to the Secretary General for Liberia on 20 November 1992. Similarly, US President William Clinton pledged encouragement to the sub-regional force on 14 January 1993, and later granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Liberians fleeing the civil war.

Consequently, ECOMOG launched a counter attack, which resulted in Forty thousand (40,000) refugees and the surrender of 700 NPFL rebels. Over 100 boy soldiers aged between 9 and 13 years belonging to Small Boy Unit (SBU)⁹ also surrendered to ECOMOG counter-offensive. Meanwhile, British medical and material aids poured in to support ECOMOG efforts, as the UN Security Council Resolution 813 (1993), reaffirmed UN belief in the Yamousoukro (I-IV) Accords and support for ECOWAS. Having lost to the ECOMOG counter-offensive and in the light of the mounting international political and diplomatic support from the international community, Taylor acceded to the Cotonou Accord of 25 July 1993 and the Geneva Agreement of 17 July 1993. Both accords agreed on arrangements for a transitional government, another ceasefire from 1 August 1993 and a general amnesty among others. The Liberian National Transition Government (LNTG) was accordingly formed at Cotonou on 14-17 August under Bimarck Kuyon, Speaker of the ILA.

The UN Intervention, 1993-94

Three hundred UN Military Observers (UNMOs) under the UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) were deployed in Liberia between 10 August 1993 and January 1994 in furtherance of UN intervention in the crisis. Maj. Gen. D. Opande (Kenya) headed the mission. Additionally, the UN Secretary General set up the Liberian Trust Fund in September into which, the US contributed \$19.83 million in support of the ECOMOG. The arrival of Tanzanian and Uganda battalions in January 1994 expanded ECOMOG in readiness for the disarmament of the combatants.

The ECOMOG started disarmament in four sectors of Liberia on 7 March 1994 as well as UNOMIL that had deployed at 27 team sites. As a result, three thousand, one hundred and ninety-two (3,192) combatants were disarmed during the process. Despite the disarmament process, renewed fighting occurred between factions and this led to threats of withdrawal by Tanzania and Ghana. However, the withdrawal of Ghana was stalled when it became ECOWAS Chair.

The September 1994 Akosombo Accord

When Ghana became the ECOWAS Chair in August 1994, the Ghanaian President appointed Victor Gbeho as Special Assistant (SA). The SA immediately set in motion arrangements that facilitated the Akosombo Accord. The Akosombo Accord, which was signed by all the factions, extended the life of the LNTG to October 1995 and concluded a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Unfortunately, the general insecurity continued as 200,000 persons were displaced and forty-three UNOMIL observers and six NGOs were held hostage by NPFL at nine sites as human shields. Although they were

later released, UNOMIL reduced its strength and closed down all sites except those in Monrovia while Tanzania eventually pulled out of the peace operations.

The Abuja Peace Process, May-August 1995

The failure of the Accra talks led to the Abuja peace process that resulted in the Abuja Accord of 19 August 1995. This Accord resolved the following: (1) a comprehensive ceasefire on 26 August 1995; (2) the installation of a new 6-member Council of State under Wilton Sankawulu on 1 September 1995; (3) disarmament and demobilization by 30 January 1996 followed by repatriation and resettlement; and (4) elections on 20 August 1996. Under this arrangement, ECOMOG was to monitor the borders to stop arms flow, disarm combatants, and assist refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). It was also to conduct confidence patrols for free and fair elections. Accordingly, the establishment of Ceasefire Violations and Disarmament Committees and the swearing-in of the ‘Collective Presidency’ took place in September 1995.

Unfortunately, ceasefire violations and factional clashes continued, the worst of the clashes occurred in Monrovia on 6 April 1996. Ironically, it was during this period that differences arose between the ECOMOG and UNOMIL on the verification of the unilateral disarmament of the NPFL. This led to UNOMIL deployment without ECOMOG support and protection, a situation that was undermined by NPFL hostility. Consequently, 88 UNOMIL military observers were relocated to Freetown and Dakar.

In apparent frustration resulting from the intractable nature of the conflict, ECOWAS warned at the Accra Conference on 7-8 May 1996, (the 14th attempt at

resolving the conflict) that it would reconsider its involvement in the Liberian crisis if the factional leaders did not remove weapons and fighters from Monrovia and return the ECOMOG weapons and looted UNOMIL equipment and materials. Accordingly, a second ceasefire agreement on 26 May 1996 resulted in self-disarming and the departure of several combatants to Grand Cape Mount County. Ceasefire and buffer zones were established in October between the United Liberation Movement of Liberia (ULIMO) factions.

The departure of the factions from Monrovia, led to the second major disarmament and demobilization, which started on 22 November 1996 at 15 sites including Monrovia. During the process that ended in February 1997, about 20,332 fighters, including 4,306 child soldiers and 250 adult females, were disarmed. Over 10,000 weapons, (more than 4,428 serviceable) and 1.24 million pieces of ammunition were received,¹⁰ the successful disarmament and demobilization of combatants created a conducive environment for elections that were to follow in accordance with the Abuja Accord.

The Electoral Process

The ban on party politics was lifted on Monday, 16 June 1997; voters' registration also took place between 24 June and 9 July in pursuance of the Abuja Accord. The general and presidential elections took place on 19 July 1997. Thirteen political parties participated in the elections, one of which was the National Patriotic Party (NPP) of Mr. Charles Ghankay Taylor who eventually won.

ECOMOG, in addition to its routine tasks, assisted the Independent Elections Commission (IECOM) in the conduct of the general and presidential elections of 19 July 1997. International and local groups, including the Carter Center, AU, UN and UNOMIL observers, Liberia Electoral Observer Network (LEON), ECOWAS Ministerial Observers and the International Foundation of Election Systems (IFES), also observed the elections.

Consequently, the management and resolution of the Liberian crisis was concluded with the inauguration of the President-elect Charles Ghankay Taylor and the NPP Government of Liberia on 19 August 1997.

It will be observed from the foregoing that the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) broke all but the last Accords during the management of the crisis. Furthermore, although Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso later joined in the peace process, their delayed cooperation undermined the early resolution of the conflict. It was also observed that the ECOWAS monitoring Group performed almost every task except diplomatic in the management of the crisis. Although ECOWAS achieved its peace plan in Liberia, the seven-year period it took indicated that there were problems faced. These problems were appraised by analyzing the GDP per capita of Liberia and all other member states at the time of this conflict, the Liberian political culture and stability, the organizational structure and mandate of ECOWAS for the management and resolution of this conflict.

Analysis

The GDP per Capita

The GDP and GNP per capita of West African states for 1991-92 and between 1975 and 1997 are shown in Appendix B and figure 1 respectively. Although Liberia's GDP per capita was higher than those of Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and The Gambia as

shown in Appendix C, its GNP ranked among the lowest in the sub-region with the lowest in the world as shown in Figure 1. It also had very negligible growth in the decade and was characterized by a lack of development. This state of the Liberian economy led to a situation where the existing infrastructure could not meet the needs of the population, especially the youths who formed ready source of recruitment for the warlords.

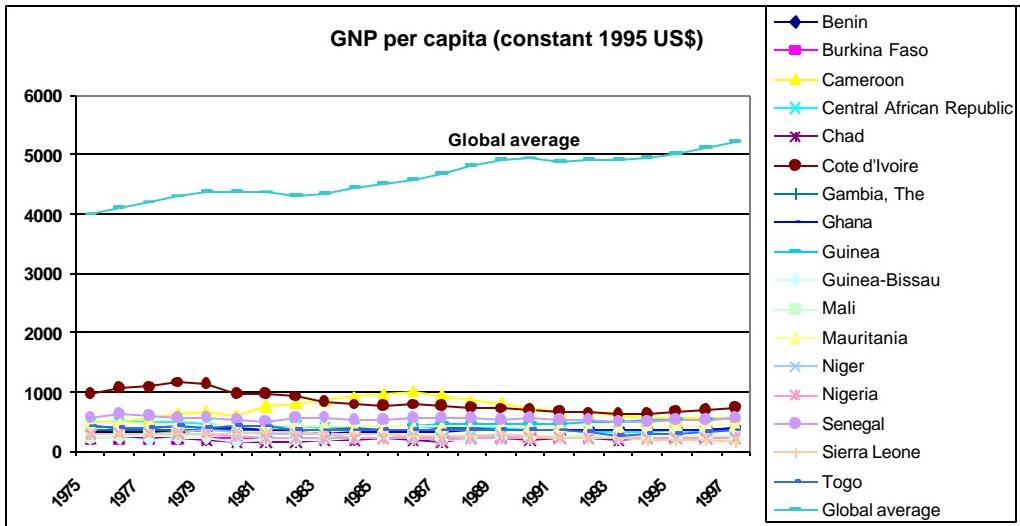


Figure 1.GNP per capita, constant 1995 US\$ (World Bank, 1999)

Polity

The Liberian conflict showed that bad governance by the Americo-Liberians and Samuel Doe, an African-Liberian is the root cause of the Liberian crisis. These governments were characterized by political exclusion, marginalization, and tribalism. This led to group reactions in the form of orchestrated demands for social change and political reforms, and subsequently, taking up of arms against the government. The

struggle for natural resources such as gold, diamonds and coal, which they exploited to sustain their struggle, also took precedence. The war was also driven by political ambitions and greediness of the warlords, as it was evident in the way they struggled for the control of mineral-rich regions of Liberia.

Mandate

Mandate is a negotiation and consensus-building process derived from multilateral diplomacy. It involves the third party intervener and the parties to the conflict. The Liberian crisis presented a situation whereby ECOWAS had multilateral diplomatic problems within it as a third party and between it and the parties to the conflict. For example, certain ECOWAS members had openly facilitated the rebellion in Liberia. Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire provided base facilities, logistical support and safe passage for Charles Taylor NPFL, while Libya provided arms and ammunition as well as training facilities.¹¹ The fact that only five of the sixteen ECOWAS member states: Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea and The Gambia initially contributed the ECOMOG troops, created the Francophone' perception that ECOMOG was designed to establish anglophone, especially Nigeria's dominance over sub-regional politics.

And between ECOWAS and the parties to the conflict, all the parties to the conflict and other Liberian interest groups did not arrive at a consensus on the structure and composition of an interim government, thus the ECOWAS contravened the fundamental basis of third party intervention in a conflict.

Organizational Structure

The ECOWAS Community failed to concretize a comprehensive organizational structure for peace and security mechanism in accordance with the provisions of its Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense matters until the advent of the Liberian crisis. Chapter III of the Protocol had provided for the Authority, Defense Council and Defense Commission as institutions for the political control and direction of the Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense matters. Further to its functions, the Defense Council was to appoint a Deputy Executive Secretary (Military), vide Article 11. Chapter V, Modalities of Intervention and Assistance, provided for the establishment of standby forces of Member states, which were to be designated Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC) and whose deployment and employment were to be guided by Articles 17 and 18 of Chapter V. As a result the SMC took up the ad hoc responsibility of running the peace process in conjunction with the Chair member nation that is rotational.

The absence of ECOWAS political organizational structure for conflict management resulted in command and control problems for the ECOMOG Force Commander (FC) as contingent commanders referred to their home governments for political guidance. The FC who was a Nigerian throughout the peace process except once, also depended on the Nigerian government for guidance. Consequently, each contingent operated with different rules of engagement.

Consequently, the Liberian case study revealed that, although Liberian economy was very poor at the time of the conflict, governance of exclusion and marginalization

practiced by both the American-Liberians who ruled for decades and President Samuel Doe, an African-Liberian was the major cause of the crisis. The result was a desperate and ruthless competition for power as witnessed during the crisis.

The desperate and ruthless competition for political power resulted in factional leaders not wanting to yield grounds during the peace process. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was thus faced with the resolution of a protracted conflict. The body was accused variously as being bias.

The ECOWAS position was compounded by the absence of an institutional organization for conflict management and resolution. ECOWAS therefore resorted to ad hoc arrangements, which changed impetus any time a new Chairman was appointed. The absence of a political organizational structure resulted in command and control problems for the ECOMOG Force Commander. Two Francophone countries, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso who openly undermined ECOWAS efforts, further weakened the situation. This attitude is a legacy of the Anglo-Francophone rivalry in Africa, which, dates back to the late nineteenth century. It thus becomes obvious that the history ECOWAS member nations as off springs of historical rivalry is a commanding factor which affects consensus building in the sub-regional effort at managing and resolving conflicts.

It was also noted that extra sub-regional influence, such as the supply of arms, ammunition, training and funding by Libya and bad press influenced the protraction of the conflict.

It can therefore be concluded that economic and political problems in Liberia precipitated the conflict, political problems being the strongest, while the colonial history

of the member nations did affect the capacity of ECOWAS management of the conflict by way of consensus on the way of funding, and mandate for the management of the conflict. This conclusion dully answers the two secondary thesis questions, which sum up as answer to the primary question. The findings also corroborated the assertions of the literature review. However, other problems include negative press and the sabotage of foreign diamond and coal mining companies whose illegal mining fortunes during the conflict were to be adversely affected by the successful resolution of the conflict.

¹Festus. B. Aboagye, “ECOMOG: A Sub-Regional Experience in Conflict Resolution Management and Peacekeeping in Liberia.” Accra, Ghana: Sedco Publishing Limited, September 1999, 34.

²Taylor claims mixed Americo-Liberia and Gola. Taylor is a highly educated man, trained as an economist in the US. He was once director of the government procurement agency under Doe, but fled to the US in 1983 to avoid being tried for embezzlement. (Richards 1995) Mr. Charles Taylor is currently the President of Liberia

³James Youboty, “Liberian Civil War, A Graphic Account,” 277. The IFMC comprised the Liberian Council of Churches (LCC), grouping Catholics and Protestants, and the National Muslim Council. Some Churches had earlier organized peace marches during which Doe was requested to resign.

⁴Maxwell M. Khobe, “The Evolution and Conduct of ECOMOG Operations in West Africa,” *Boundaries of Peace Support Operations*, Monograph No. 44, February, 2000, 3.

⁵Amos Sawyer, “Dynamics of Conflict Management in Liberia.” Accra, Ghana: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1997, 10-20.

⁶Under the definitions of Article 1, “Authority” means the Authority of Heads of State and Government as defined in Article 5 of the Treaty.

⁷Amos Sawyer, “Dynamics of Conflict Management in Liberia.” Accra, Ghana: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1997. 23.

⁸James Youboty, “Liberian Civil War: A Graphic Account.” 561.

⁹The SBU consisted of child soldiers between the ages of 9 and 13 in NPFL.

¹⁰UN, Final Report of the Secretary General on UNOMIL, S/1997/12, 12 September 1997, 2

¹¹Joses G. S. Yoroms, “Regional Security: Collective defense and the Problem of Peace Initiative in West Africa: The case of ECOMOG,” Paper presented at the 17th Annual Conference of NSIA, held at CDS, Abuja, Nigeria, 9-12 December, 1991, 29

CHAPTER 4

THE SIERRA LEONEAN CONFLICT

The Sierra Leonean conflict was the second case study analyzed. It should be noted that the conflict started while the Liberian conflict was on going, and as a result, some people consider this conflict an offshoot of the Liberian conflict. Though that was not the case, Sierra Leone shares its southeastern border with Liberia (Appendix D) and the rebel groups had some things in common: they were products of Libyan radical ideology and training, they had basing, training, and logistics support from Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso, and they also had youths and children as their source of recruitment. The Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia therefore exchanged mercenaries, reinforcements and military launching bases, during both conflicts.

The Sierra Leonean conflict was similarly be appraised with a view to identifying how the causes of conflicts and the history of ECOWAS member nations contributed to the problems encountered by ECOWAS in the management of the Sierra Leonean conflicts with respect to the primary and secondary questions of this thesis. The findings of the appraisal were compared with the assertions in the literature review. However, a chronological account of the conflict and the management of the conflict preceded the appraisal.

Background

The Republic of Sierra Leone covers an area of 71,740 square kilometers (29,699 square miles) with a population of 1,297,000 in the mid-1996. Freetown, the capital had a

population of about half a million. Sierra Leone is rich in diamonds and has attracted foreigners from within and outside Africa. On the other hand, the UN estimated in April 1998 that there were about 250,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea and another 177,000 in Liberia.¹

Political History

The political history of Sierra Leone started in 1787 when 450 freed Negro slaves and 60 White prostitutes were settled at Granville Town, an area of land purchased from the Mende King Tom for a little over fifty-nine pounds,² the protectorate administration of the British over Sierra Leone from 1787 was extended to the hinterland in 1896. Constitutional reform was instituted in 1951 after which political power was gradually devolved from 1953 until full independence on 27 April 1961 when the government of the Sierra Leone People's Party was inaugurated under Dr Milton Margai.

The rule of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) under Dr. Milton Margai and his brother, Dr Albert Margai, ended in March 1967 when the All People's Congress (APC) led by Dr Siaka Stevens gained a parliamentary majority in the general elections. However, a military coup prevented the APC from taking power until April 1968 when the army mutinied in protest. In March 1971 another coup against the APC government was suppressed with the assistance of Guinean troops. Further political unrest amid financial scandals by government officials forced the President Siaka Stevens to announce early elections in May 1977. Meanwhile, his government also adopted a one-party state constitution, and declared a state of emergency in the country. The next

elections of 1982 returned APC government to power until 1985 when Dr Siaka Stevens lost elections to Major General Joseph Momoh.

Major General Momoh had hardly spent one year in office when, due to unhealthy state of economy, public sector corruption, unpaid salaries, wide spread strikes and agitation for multi-party system, a coup was attempted against his government. The government promptly responded by taking a number of repressive actions, which included the declaration of another state of emergency, introduction of press censorship and enactment of laws against hoarding of currencies and goods as well as smuggling. In spite of these actions, the government still yielded to sustained public pressure by setting in motion the necessary constitutional reforms that would lead to elections in may 1991. However, the elections were later postponed until 1992, citing the possibility of a spillover of the ongoing Liberian crisis as the reason for the postponement. The government of Major General Momoh was toppled in a coup on 29 April 1992 while it was defending the postponement of the elections.

The 29 April 1992 coup that brought Captain Valentine Strasser as Head of State of Sierra Leone, put an end to the constitutional reforms of Major General Momoh. Apart from three failed coup attempts against the Strasser military regime, it had to contend with the invasion and rebellion of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone.

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF)

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone, led by Corporal Foday Saybana Sankoh was a faction of the original RUF, which was formed by a group of radical lecturers and students of the Fourah Bay College, Freetown in 1982. Foday Sankoh had led some forces during the NPFL diversionary incursions into Sierra Leone

in March 1991. By early 1993, the RUF itself had captured some towns in attacks launched into Sierra Leone and was flushed out by government troops by December 1993. Another group, the newly formed National Front for the Restoration of Democracy, launched an offensive from Guinea in early 1994 and was also flushed out in the north and east by Israeli-trained units.³

The RUF activities continued to spread further into the country; for instance, in November 1994 it captured two British members of a relief organization. It demanded the British government recognition of the RUF as a political organization and assistance with arms and medical supplies as conditions for the release of those captured. In January 1995, the RUF also captured two mining installations, the Sierra Leone Ore and Metal Company (SIEROMOCO) and the Sierra Rutile Limited. The employees of both installations were seized including eight foreigners. In further operations against the northwestern town of Kambia, the RUF abducted seven Italian and Brazilian Roman Catholic nuns and a number of Sierra Leonean citizens. It further threatened to kill the British captives if the government of Sierra Leone executed an officer earlier convicted of collaboration with the rebels.⁴

Similarly, in early February 1995, Foday Sankoh reneged on his invitation for ICRC mediation in discussions with the government. He also rejected UN and AU appeals for peace negotiations and instead demanded the withdrawal of all foreign troops as a precondition for negotiations. Ironically, it was at this time that some disaffected members of the armed forces known as sobels, perpetrated acts of banditry, indiscriminate killings and looting in mid-February. This resulted in about 900,000

displaced persons, among who were 185,000 and 90,000 refugees in Guinea and Liberia respectively. The remaining 625,000 others was internally displaced. Following worsening security situation, government ordered total mobilization while it received reinforcement from Guinea, Nigeria and South African mercenaries, Executive Outcomes (EOs) and Gurkha mercenaries who had served in the British Army. Subsequently, the government initiated a series of offensives on rebel locations that resulted in the recapture of Songo and SIEROMCO installations in May 1995.

Consequent upon the success of the offensives, the Sierra Leonean government invited ECOWAS to mediate in negotiations with RUF; the call for negotiation was turned down by RUF, who insisted on the removal of all foreign troops from Sierra Leone as a condition for negotiations. Continued RUF operations led to the recapture of Kailahun and 10 other towns in Moyamba District in November 1995 before negotiations by an AU Mission and RUF representatives could begin in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. In December 1995, the Strasser regime announced arrangements for elections in February 1996.

Despite announcement in December 1995, of arrangements for elections in February 1996, Strasser was toppled in a bloodless palace coup, in January 1996. He was toppled by Capt. Julius Maada Bio, the Chief of Defense Staff for alleged plans for self-perpetuation in power. The RUF promptly indicated its readiness to negotiate unconditionally with the new government. It then declared a temporary ceasefire to facilitate voters' registration while calling for a suspension of elections pending comprehensive peace agreement that would enable RUF participation. The suspension of

elections was however rejected by the Independent National Elections Commission (INEC). The RUF consequently abandoned the ceasefire and launched another series of offensives in which a large number of civilians were killed.

The elections were held as scheduled on 26 February 1996 in government held areas despite the breakdown of the ceasefire. The SLPP won the elections and its leader; Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was elected president. The SLPP government was inaugurated on 29 February 1996.

It is worth noting here that the democratic government of President Kabbah had a number of opposing pillars of power to contend with as it embarked on a program of economic reforms at inception. The pillars included the northern political elites, who were influential during the APC 24 year corrupt and repressive rule, the corrupt senior leadership of the Armed Forces who had subjugated themselves to the leadership of their juniors in order to protect their economic interests, and the junior officers and soldiers that served in the previous military regimes, who had tasted affluence and influence of political power. Consequently, President Kabbah immediately embarked on reconciliation with these power groups, especially the RUF.

Kabbah-RUF Negotiations, March 1996 to May 1997

President Kabbah and the RUF had discussions in April, which led to ceasefire agreement and the establishment of three joint committees for the disarmament and demobilization of the rebel forces. But when rebel activities continued despite the ceasefire agreement, and the disloyal tendencies of the Armed Forces increased, the government employed the services of the fierce traditional hunter-fighter sect, the

Kamajors.⁵ The employment of the Kamajors was resented by the Armed Forces who clashed with them on many occasions. However, another peace agreement was signed between government and the RUF in Abidjan at the end of November 1996, in the agreement, RUF was to be demobilized and reconstituted into a political party, while foreign troops were to be withdrawn and replaced with foreign observers. Accordingly, a National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (NCCP) was established and all mercenaries started withdrawing. The repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees from Liberia also commenced.

The November Agreement was hurt by an in fighting between the RUF, a faction had announced the removal of Foday Sankoh as their leader while the other, loyal to him kidnapped the Sierra Leonean Ambassador to Guinea. The pro-Sankoh faction tried to use the Ambassador as bargain for the release of Sankoh who had been in detention in Nigeria for alleged possession of arms.

The Military Coup of May 25, 1997

The coup of 25 May 1997 was a manifestation of the latent potency of the Armed Forces, which was another opposing pillar of power to the Kabbah government. Thus the coup plotters led by Cpl Tamba Gborie released some previous coup detainees, one of them was Major Koromah who later led the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). The military junta of Major Koromah subsequently formed an alliance with RUF in order to eliminate opposition. In the international arena, the overthrow of the democratic government of President Kabbah caused great concern to ECOWAS and the international community; this led to the UN Security Council Resolution 1132 of January

1998 which imposed a travel ban on the junta. Despite the international pressure on the military junta, it became apparent that AFRC was not willing to hand-over power back to President Kabbah. Consequently, Nigeria and the UK government made an arrangement whereby a UK government proxy,⁶ the London-based security organization, Sandline International, Rupert Bone, a former British Diplomat in Sierra Leone, and Peter Penfold, the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone joined Nigeria to map out plans to oust the junta through military action. The arrangement received financial support from a Vancouver-based banker, Rakesh Saxena. The arrangement also included provisions for diamond concessions in payment for the efforts and contributions of interested parties;⁷ the stage was thus set for the return of President Kabbah.

Reinstatement of President Tejan Kabbah

In January 1998, ECOMOG commanded by late Brigadier General Maxwell Khobe launched attacks against the Junta-RUF alliance and by 15 February 1998, had taken all of Freetown. Subsequently, President Kabbah was returned to power on 10 March 1998. Despite the reinstatement of President Kabbah, rebel activities continued in some parts of Sierra Leone, as a result, the opposition party called for meaningful dialogue and negotiation to resolve the protracted conflict. However, the Kabbah government preferred to bring those involved in ousting it to book. Consequently, a number of civilians were sentenced to various jail terms while twenty-four soldiers were executed for their roles in the military coup. The rebel leader, Foday Sankoh was repatriated from Nigeria and charged to a High Court on an 8-count charge on 24 September 1998.

Having brought the offenders to book, the government was faced with the lack of a credible and loyal Armed Forces, what it had was the remnants of the junta forces in the Armed Forces and Civil Defense Force (CDF), mainly the Kamajors. At the same time, the ECOMOG troop contributing countries; Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea were getting weary of being involved in another peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone as a result of the economic, political and social cost of the Liberia peace process. There was thus a lull in activities on the part of the government and the ECOMOG troops.

The January 1999 Rebel offensive

In early January 1999, the RUF seized the initiative at this time and launched an offensive on Freetown. And within ten days it had pushed into western Freetown and seized the centre of the city including Government House and the port of Freetown. The fighting left more than 6,300 people dead and brought the estimated death toll for the entire civil war to about 20,000 people with half of the population of 4.5 million inhabitants displaced.⁸ As a result of this rebel offensive, the President announced that Foday Sankoh will be released if he ordered his troops to respect a ceasefire for one week. Consequently, Foday Sankoh was flown to Ivory Coast on 11 January 1999 as part of the ceasefire arrangements under the auspices of Togo, Ivory Coast and the UN Special Representative in Sierra Leone. Meanwhile, the International Community continued to condemn the RUF while ECOMOG was augmented from 4,000 to about 12,000 troops. At the same time countries contributing troops to ECOMOG condemned Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast for allegedly training thousands of rebels in urban guerrilla

fighting and the Liberian President Charles Taylor for allegedly arming the rebels as well as reinforcing the RUF with Liberian combatants.⁹

However, by the end of the first week in January 1999, ECOMOG had recaptured eastern Freetown and opened roads in the western and northwestern parts of the country. Notwithstanding these successes the RUF continued to dominate several parts of the country and retained considerable freedom of movement and action. President Kabbah probably realized the import of the fact that despite ECOMOG presence, the RUF still held sway in several parts of the country. Thus, sometime in early April 1999 he sought to exploit diplomacy with the rebels.

The Diplomatic Approach

Consequently, Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF, was flown to Togo on 18 April 1999 by UNOMSIL at the request of the Government of Sierra Leone. On 25 April 1999, some other members of RUF and the remnants of the AFRC arrived at Togo to start weeklong internal talks with their leader. The talks, which lasted between 26 April and 10 May, resulted in a position paper, which indicated the RUF's readiness to transform into a political party. The paper also contained demands¹⁰ which included: (1) General amnesty for RUF/AFRC personnel; (2) Establishment of a 4-year transitional government whose functions would include the drafting of a new constitution; (3) Reform the national security forces and the civil service; (4) Arrangements for joint management of the mineral industries; (5) Encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all combatants; (6) Establishment of a national electoral commission; (7) Following the signing of a peace agreement, the deployment of a neutral monitoring group as part of the ceasefire arrangement; (8) The departure of all foreign troops and mercenaries from

Sierra Leone within fourteen days of the signing of the peace agreement; and (9) The termination of the status of forces agreement between the governments of Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

The power-sharing arrangement was to involve ten out of the twenty ministerial-including the vice presidency and four out of the eleven deputy ministerial portfolios for the RUF. To realize this, the voters' register was to be opened for the registration of RUF candidates so that they could hold such portfolios.

In response, the government on May 1999 accepted the transformation of the RUF into a political party, but stressed that the proposal for a transitional government contravenes the constitution and that the issue of general amnesty would be looked into according to its merit towards the peace objectives. Subsequently the government and the RUF signed a ceasefire agreement, which came into effect on 24 May, on 18 May 1999. The agreement called for both parties to maintain their respective positions; refrain from hostile acts; guarantee safe and unhindered access by humanitarian organizations to all people in need; immediate release of prisoners of war and non-combatants; and subject to security council authorizations, deployment of UN military observers to observe compliance with the agreement.¹¹

The Peace Process

In furtherance of the support for the peace process, a meeting of the International Contact Group on Sierra Leone was convened by the UK at the UN on 17 June 1999. The main thrust of the meeting was the formulation and funding of a program for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of some 40,000 ex-combatants,

which comprised RUF, Civil Defense Force (CDF), and Sierra Leone Liberation Army (SLA). It was estimated that the program would cost about \$45 million out of which UK contributed about \$12.52 million. The World Bank pledged \$9.1 million, while the European Commission promised a package of \$30 million. The international support for the DDR program set the stage for the final peace process.

Consequently, the final Peace Agreement was signed on Wednesday, 7 July 1999 between the Government Sierra Leone, represented by President Kabbah and the RUF, represented by Cpl Foday Sankoh in Lome, Togo. In attendance were Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Charles Taylor of Liberia and Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso. The eight parts of the Agreement included: (1) Cessation of Hostilities; (2) Governance; (3) Other Political issues; (4) Post-Conflict Military and Security Issues; (5) Humanitarian, Human Rights and Socio-economic Issues; (6) Implementation of the Agreement; (7) Moral Guarantors and International Support; and (8) Final Provisions.¹²

At this juncture, Nigeria announced a six-month phased program for the withdrawal of its 12,000 troops from Sierra Leone; however, a thousand troops were left behind for the DDR program. Similarly, the UN Secretary General announced the commitment of the UN to deploy 6,000 troops to facilitate the implementation of the peace agreement. The UN mission is still on going in Sierra Leone.

Although the rebel incursion was launched from neighboring Liberia, it spanned almost the same period with the Liberian conflict. This situation was attributable to the common ideological mentor and common sponsors shared by the rebels in both conflicts. It was also attributable to similar political situations, which resulted in the struggle for

political power in both countries, thus it became easy for a Liberian crisis to become a Sierra Leonean crisis and vice versa. The failures of successive Sierra Leonean governments to apply diplomacy in handling the conflict; the governments, especially those that had Defense pact with Nigeria believed that the rebels could be eliminated militarily. The Tejan Kabbah administration adopted the diplomatic approach after pursuing the military option for too long.

Analysis

The problems encountered by ECOWAS in managing and resolving this conflict were appraised under the methodology parameters in the following paragraphs.

GDP per Capita

The GDP and GNP per capita of Sierra Leone was among the lowest in West Africa (see Appendix C and Figure 1), accordingly the Sierra Leonean case study revealed bad political and economic management as the main cause of the Sierra Leonean crisis. The economic reform program of President Tejan Kabbah's government therefore faced enormous opposition from the ruling elites whose economic interests flourished at the expense of the state economy and who lived in affluence while the populace descended into poverty.

On other hand, the state of ECOWAS funds did not change, since there was no appreciable economic growth in the sub-region during this period. Fortunately, international support was more forthcoming in this crisis than in the Liberian crisis. The Sierra Leonean peace process received assistance from the UK, European Commission,

the World Bank and the UN Observer Mission is still on going. Also the main ECOWAS troop contributing countries were still Nigeria, Ghana, and Guinea.

Polity

It was observed that political instability started in March 1967 when the Sierra Leone Peoples Party government was to hand over power the All People's Congress after 14-year rule. Further political instability was fuelled under the APC government by corrupt leadership, nepotism, and repressive policies. The political elites and government functionaries lived in affluence and the gap between societal social and economic strata widened to extremes of poverty and affluence. This situation could be partly attributable to the colonial experience of the elites, who served as colonial proxies in the indirect system of administration. The phenomenon was aptly described by Thompson (1971) who asserted that, by setting a wide social and economic gulf between them and their subjects, Europeans provided an example of a living style and standard for the African elites to follow when they gained power, thereby creating a serious cleavage in postcolonial African society.¹³ The situation could also be attributable the desire of the political leaders to acquire enough in order to secure the future which they believed was uncertain.

Mandate

President Tejan Kabbah on 25 May 1997 appealed to ECOWAS Heads of State to assist restore democracy by restoring him to power in Sierra Leone. Thus there was legitimacy in ECOWAS mandate for assisting Sierra Leone. The ECOWAS Heads of State consequently approved the deployment of ECOMOG troops in Sierra Leone. This however, was not devoid of the Anglo-francophone bickering for example, Ivory Coast,

Burkina Faso and Liberia did not officially contribute troops to the peace process and were at one time alleged to have trained the rebels. President Charles Taylor was particularly alleged to have reinforced the RUF with Liberian mercenaries.

Organizational Structure

The ECOWAS organizational structure was same during the period of the Sierra Leonean crisis. The ECOMOG Force Commander (FC) had command and control problems. The FC and his subordinate commanders had conflict of chain of command between the ECOWAS structure and their nations' Chiefs of Defense Staff.

Thus, the problems encountered by ECOWAS in managing the Sierra Leonean crisis were; the struggle for political power by the elites, which was the cause of the conflict, the inability of ECOWAS to fund the complete management and resolution of the conflict (first secondary question), the alleged covert support of some Francophone countries (second secondary question), the “pay back” reinforcement of President Charles Taylor to RUF which fought on the side of NPFL during the Liberian crisis and the absence of institutional mechanism for conflict management and resolution. The analysis of the case study also supported the assertions in the literature review.

Other problems included the application of military force as the only solution to the crisis, and the breakdown of the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone into indiscipline and lawless factions. The emphasis on military solution resulted from the erroneous belief that the rebels were a group of rascals that would eventually be eliminated in a short while. The breakdown of discipline led to some members of the Armed Forces supporting the rebels at one time or the other and the subsequent formation of an alliance between

the RUF and the AFRC. This situation arose from the early use of the military by the political parties to topple their political opponents or perpetuate them in power; the military later became wiser than their masters. However, President Tejan Kabbah realized this situation and took appropriate steps that led to the peace Agreement that ended the conflict.

¹Africa South of the Sahara, 28th Edition, London: Europa Publication, 1998, 928.

²K.B.C. Ownubiko, (1), "History of West Africa, AD 1000-1800," vol. 1. Onitsha: Africana-FEP Publishers, 1967, 209-219.

³Festus B. Aboagye, "ECOMOG: A Sub-Regional Experience in Conflict Resolution Management and Peacekeeping in Liberia." Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited, September 1999, 234.

⁴The Nuns were released in late March while the 10 remaining foreigners and six citizens were released to the ICRC in April 1995.

⁵Festus B. Aboagye, "ECOMOG: A Sub-Regional Experience in Conflict Resolution Management and Peacekeeping in Liberia." Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited, September 1999, 237.

⁶Nigeria was under a military regime, which the UK did not want to, seen to be in league with.

⁷Festus B. Aboagye, "ECOMOG: A Sub-Regional Experience in Conflict Resolution Management and Peacekeeping in Liberia." Accra: Sedco Publishing Limited, September 1999, 239.

⁸Ibid. 243.

⁹Ibid. 246.

¹⁰UN Security Council report of the Secretary-General on the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, S/1999/645, 2

¹¹Ibid. 3

¹²UN-IRIN, West Africa: Weekly Round-up 27-1999[19990710], 9 July 1999, p.1-2. UN-IRIN, West Africa: Sierra Leone, Special Report on Demobilization [19990713], 1.

¹³Leonard Thompson, “France and Britain in Africa: A Perspective,” In Prosser Gifford and W. M. Roger Louis, eds. *France and Britain in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971, 782.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis researched into the problems of conflict management and resolution in the West African sub-region using ECOWAS as a case study. In doing this, primary and secondary questions were drawn to identify the following: (1) The problems of conflict management and resolution in the West African sub-region; (2) The effects of the causes of conflicts on the ECOWAS capacity for management and resolution of conflicts in West Africa; and (3) The effects of the colonial history of member states on ECOWAS capacity for management and resolution of conflicts in West Africa. The Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts were analyzed using the products of literature review as reference under the following methodology parameters: (1) GDP and GNP per capita of Liberia, Sierra Leone and the other members of ECOWAS; (2) The political culture and stability of Liberia and Sierra Leone prior to their conflicts; (3) The ECOWAS organizational structure for conflict management and resolution; and (4) The ECOWAS mandate for the resolution of the both conflicts.

The main problems of conflict management and resolution as observed in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts were bad political and economic management in the countries, the Anglo-Francophone rivalry, and the absence of an institutional organizational structure for conflict management.

The Liberian governments of Americo-Liberians and Samuel Doe, an African-Liberian were characterized by politics of exclusion, marginalization, and tribalism. These governments doled out business opportunities and financial benefits as rewards to

political supporters while instruments of state were used to suppress political opponents. The state controlled the economy, and since public officers and the societal elites were supporters of government, the state economy suffered at the expense of private economic interests. The result was public agitation by the deprived majority of the populace for change; the ostracized political opposition took up the gauntlet and led the rebellions that led to the civil war.

The same situation existed in Sierra Leone; the governments of the two rival political parties, the Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) and the All Peoples Party (APP) struggled for political power as state power and loyalty was central to the survival of their elitist groups. Consequently, they sought and held on to power by all means including the use of the military. They restructured the military to reflect state patronage and loyalty and subsequently used it to intimidate and harass political opponents. This paved way for a one party system through which they perpetuated themselves. Economic fortunes and opportunities also resided in the elites at the expense of the people while the mineral resources (diamonds, gold and coal) flourished as personal sources of self-economic interests for politicians and government functionaries. The military subsequently realized that the effectiveness of the gun on the opposition was as good on the government itself. Thus the military took up arms against the government of the day at will resulting in more than five military coup d'etats in a decade.

The similarity in the trends of bad political and economic management in Liberian and Sierra Leone is partly attributable to the imbalance exposure to western education, bureaucracy and business of some parts of the countries. The elites of such advantaged

parts became post-colonial rulers who would rather maintain the living standards of the colonial era than strive for the development of their states. For example, Thompson¹ (1971) asserts that, by transmitting Western norms and modern literacy skills in mission and public schools, Europeans nourished new African elites who eventually won political power for themselves on the ruins of power as well as white power. By setting a wide social and economic gulf between themselves and their subjects, Europeans provided an example of a living style and standard for the African elites to follow when they gained power, thereby creating a serious cleavage in postcolonial African society. Unfortunately, these cleavages, which were ethnic or regional, precipitated conflicts along these lines immediately after the independence of most African states.

Economy does not flourish in the type of political situation described above; consequently, it was no surprise that economies of both Liberia and Sierra Leone and indeed of the West African sub-region were very weak during the period under study as indicated in Appendix C and Figure 1 respectively. It was therefore understandable that ECOWAS had problems funding both Peace processes since the member states from which financial contributions were expected were economically weak.

The problem of Anglo-Francophone dichotomy was another strong factor within the ECOWAS that seriously undermined the management and resolution of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts. Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso were particularly singled as being responsible for the actions. However, it should be noted that the British and French colonialists sowed the seeds of the situation in Africa back in the late nineteenth century. According to Thompson (1971), the European legacy linguistic division within Africa has

promoted intercourse and understanding and cultural, economy and political affiliations among all French-speaking countries in tropical Africa and, and to a lesser extent among the English speaking countries as well. At the same time they have created a barrier to intercourse, understanding, and affiliation between the two groups of states.² Despite all efforts by the leaders of ECOWAS to break this barrier, the Francophone countries see no better alternative to the French protectionist role in the sub-region. Consequently, they feel more security and prospect in their economic and political affiliations with France.

This Anglo-Francophone dichotomy was highly instrumental to the prolongation of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflict as Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso provided legitimate cover for rebel illegal trade in diamonds, gold and timber apart from training and base facilities provided. The proceeds the illegal trade were used to procure arms and ammunition.

The last major problem encountered in the management and resolution of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts was the absence of an organizational structure for security mechanism at the time of the two conflicts. This led to ad hoc arrangements and lack of continuity in the management of the Peace process. It was noted however that the Protocol for the establishment of an institutional structure was in place but was not implemented before the outbreak of the conflicts. However, it was also observed that the existence of the institutional structure would have faced the same problems, for according to observers; it was lop-sided and encouraged the hegemonic tendency of member nations in the SMC. The ECOWAS indeed recognized this problem and consequently reviewed the Protocol immediately after the resolution of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean

conflicts. The new ECOWAS conflict management mechanism comprises 6 principal organs of formulation and implementation through consultation and collective management of sub-regional issues.

Conclusion

Although the four problems discussed above were vital to the successful management of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean conflicts, it is believed that the twin problems of bad political and economic management form the core. This is because a well-managed economy enhances development for the well being of the society and a developed society would relatively be less deprived. The less deprived a society is the less the prevalence of conflicts. It is opined that there is no level of efficiency of conflict management and resolution of a multilateral third party that could eliminate the root causes of conflicts; rather the efficient management of the root causes by individual nations reduces the prevalence of conflicts. Accordingly, a well-managed economy and a developed society enhance good and stable polity. And for the sub-region, the Anglo-Francophone dichotomy notwithstanding, the economic integration of both groups of states is essential to the development of the sub-region, this is more so when there is a limit to which the French can trade off their national interest for that of any former colony.

It can therefore be concluded that while ECOWAS has the capability to project forces for peace operations and to modify its organizational structure, it does not have the economic capacity to manage and resolve conflicts without external assistance, since economic development is the over arching cause of conflicts in the West African sub-region.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Consequently, emphasis should be more on how to achieve the economic development of individual member nations as well as the economic integration of the sub-region. The recent moves towards a common market are laudable but the health of the economies of member nations and the lingering problems of Anglo-Francophone dichotomy need to be addressed accordingly. Further research is therefore recommended into ways of achieving economic integration of the ECOWAS sub-region devoid of Anglo-Francophone dichotomy.

¹Leonard Thompson, “France and Britain in Africa: A Perspective,” Prosser Gifford and W. M. Roger Louis, *France and Britain in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), 782.

²Ibid., 784.

APPENDIX A

COLONIAL/LANGUAGE DISTRIBUTION OF ECOWAS MEMBER STATES

Colonial/Language Distribution of ECOWAS Member States

Serial	Country	English	French	Portuguese
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1.	Benin		*	
2.	Burkina Faso		*	
3.	Ivory Coast		*	
4.	Cape Verde			*
5.	The Gambia	*		
6.	Ghana	*		
7.	Guinea		*	
8.	Guinea-Bissau			*
9.	Liberia	*		
10.	Mali		*	
11.	Niger		*	
12.	Nigeria	*		
13.	Senegal		*	
14.	Sierra Leone	*		
15.	Togo		*	

Source: Adapted from Colonel II Hassan, Defense Adviser, ECOWAS Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution Mechanisms-Problems and Prospects. UN Milads and Civpol Advisers Seminar, New York, October 2002. 13.

APPENDIX B

MAP OF LIBERIA



Source:http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/li/liberia_map_flag_geography.html

APPENDIX C

GDP PER CAPITA OF ECOWAS MEMBER STATES (1991-92).

Serial	Country	GDP (\$, 87-90)
(a)	(b)	(c)
1	Benin	1.76bn
2	Burkina Faso	2.69bn
3	Cape Verde	213m
4	Cote d'Ivoire	10.63bn
5	Equatorial Guinea	139.75m
6	The Gambia	212m
7	Ghana	5.67bn
8	Guinea (Conakry)	2.44bn
9	Guinea-Bissau	141.11m
10	Liberia	990m
11	Mali	2.14bn
12	Niger	1.93bn
13	Nigeria	27.33bn
14	Senegal	5.81bn
15	Sierra Leone	789.02m
16	Togo	1.57bn

Source: Adapted from Aboagye, 1999, ECOMOG: A Sub-regional Experience in Conflict Resolution, Management and Peacekeeping in Liberia; p.146.

APPENDIX D

MAP OF SIERRA LEONE



Source: http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/sl/Sierra_Leone_map_flag_geography.htm

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